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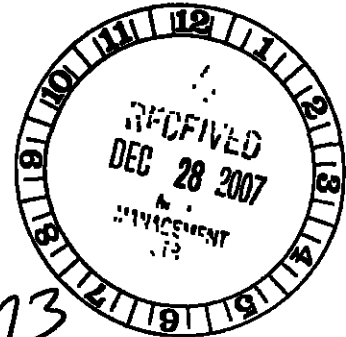


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REPUBLICAN SPOKESMAN - REVENUE COMMITTEE

HOUSE REPUBLICAN BUDGET NEGOTIATOR

MARK BEAUBIEN
ASSISTANT REPUBLICAN LEADER
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
52ND DISTRICT



December 20, 2007

The Honorable Vernon A. Williams
Secretary, Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20423

RE: STB Finance Docket No. 35087

Dear Secretary Williams:

I am writing to you regarding the above-referenced docket to express my opposition to the acquisition of a rarely used freight line (the EJ&E) by Canadian National Railroad for its use as the primary bypass route for all the international freight traffic it plans to transport through the greater Chicagoland area. When this rail line was built a century ago it was mainly surrounded by fields for miles in all directions. Throughout its history the line has experienced only a few trains a day. It is now in the midst of vibrant and growing communities that will be devastated by a vast increase in rail freight traffic that will gridlock traffic flow, create life-threatening safety hazards when emergency responders are delayed at grade crossings, diminish air quality, and create an unacceptable level of noise pollution for my constituents.

CN has said publicly in the media and in its filings with the Board that it plans to work with impacted communities to mitigate the problems it would create through this acquisition. Given the enormous costs associated with mitigation requirements up and down the line, I think it is vital that CN start discussing publicly the scope of the financial investment they are contemplating in this regard and start discussing it now.

CN is looking to expand its business internationally as evidenced by the CN CEO E. Hunter Harrison's suggestion in a November 29, 2007 article in the *Globe and Mail Update* that the recent opening of the Port of Prince Rupert on Canada's west coast could mean an extra \$300 million in annual revenues for CN by 2009. According to Mr. Harrison, this acquisition is the linchpin in its international expansion plans. As it is the largest and most profitable railroad

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operating in the United States, we cannot allow Canadian National to enrich its stockholders at the expense of American communities that will realize no direct benefit themselves, or American taxpayers who will be stuck picking up the bill if CN is allowed to disregard its financial responsibilities in this matter.

The only way I could support the approval of this acquisition by the Surface Transportation Board is if the Board dictates that CN finance significant mitigation measures of unprecedented levels to remedy fully the problems they are creating. While CN envisions decades of increased profits and efficiencies as the result of this acquisition, the villages and towns in my district are facing decades of growth in freight traffic that promises to diminish the vitality of these communities as desirable places to live and do business.

Given the exceptional level of environmental impact this acquisition will have on the surrounding communities, I urge that the Board give this acquisition a thorough review that goes far beyond the norm in these circumstances. I look forward to working with the Board throughout the review process to insure that the interests of my district are protected, and I ask that you enter these comments into the record of the docket.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark H. Beaubien", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mark H. Beaubien
State Representative,
District 52

MHB/pt